

Frederick County Sustainability Commission

Meeting Minutes for

11/18/15

FCSC Attendees: Tom Anderson, Susan Weber, Jennifer Bird, Annie Jones, Tim Jones, Ron Kaltenbaugh, Chris May, Mike Swanson, Mike Uecker

OSER: Shannon Moore, Lisa Orr

Public: Al Imhoff, Suzann Cliber (Frederick Co. Gov.,FCG), Brad Gottschall (Fort Detrick), Liz Peterson, David Whitaker (FCG), John Daniel, Alan Feinberg

Welcome – Introductory Comments:

- The Chair (Tom Anderson) welcomed all FCSC attendees and guests and asked Commission members to introduce themselves and describe their backgrounds for the new member, Jennifer Bird.
- The Chair discussed the issue of FCSC night meetings. There could be more public participation since more people may be free to attend at night. Night meetings would also be helpful for those FCSC members who work. The meetings would occur on Wednesdays at 7 pm. It's possible that, due to family constraints and previous commitments, not all members could attend third Wednesday night meetings. Perhaps a supplemental meeting on a weekend specially designed for the public and well publicized in advance would be a good alternative. Also a different Wednesday meeting day would allow for video coverage. Shannon will explore all these options for Winchester Hall availability.
- The Vice Chair noted that the October 2015 meeting minutes were previously distributed. A motion to approve was made by Tim Jones and seconded by Ron Kaltenbaugh. The minutes were unanimously approved.
- The Vice Chair pointed out the addition of Action Items to the meeting minutes. These items will be reviewed at every meeting to note progress and to close out items that have been accomplished. Reviewed each item (see Action Items later in these minutes).
- The Vice Chair distributed handouts listing planned FCSC field trips to observe sustainability practices in use. First trip will be to the new Emmitsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant for the December meeting. The business meeting will be shortened to the first hour, with a tour of the plant and the solar array field to occur during the second hour. [The tour was conducted first in Emmitsburg, then the business meeting.] Tim Jones suggested adding one or more farms to the list of field trips. He will contact the farmers and provide contacts for visits to one or more farms in the County.
- The Vice Chair advised that she had talked to Shannon Moore about the FCSC having an intern to help with preparing postings to its web site. The plan is to have the person work 6 to 8 hours per week, starting in the spring semester. The Vice Chair will meet weekly with the intern to set goals, answer questions, provide encouragement and assess progress.

County Comprehensive Plan for Livable Frederick and Role of Sustainability Plan

David Whitaker, the County's Chief of Comprehensive Planning, provided a presentation regarding the County's initiative to update its Comprehensive Plan. The County Executive has asked him to look at all the old comprehensive plans as part of that process. A decade ago, the term "sustainability" came into use as a term in planning. A sustainable community replaces competition with cooperation while preserving options for those that follow. Sustainability links energy, social equity, economics, etc. The County's aging population is increasing. Millennials are less inclined than previous generations to want to live in rural areas. In the past, starter homes had led to trading up to the kind of homes that have been built in Frederick, the kind of homes that the aging population is now downsizing from. "Livable Frederick" (the name of the new Comprehensive Plan) will be a two-year planning process. It will not be looking at zoning, instead it will be planning for the years 2025 and 2040 in terms of policy as to where, when and how the County will grow. There is a Steering Committee to help in this effort. The STAR community rating system for local governments as a way to gauge sustainability will be used in this process. Public participation will be a part of the process using social media and sophisticated survey methods. The plan will include action recommendations and performance measures.

Multimodal accessibility analysis is a new tool for transportation planning. The planning process used to consistently extend trend lines. But miles traveled have started to decrease due to several causes. The old approach to planning had to do with growth and development; it did not connect the systems. While it helped to manage growth, now there is a need to evolve. Some parts of the market cannot get into Frederick for housing. We want to see what a sustainable community will look like in 2025 and 2040. We want to get to a condition where all land uses will be economically resilient. The planning process will be looking at the built environment, energy, economy, jobs, arts and community, natural systems, health and safety, responsible regionalism, agricultural economies, and more.

Data on telework may exist. David will look into getting that data (perhaps estimates from the Metropolitan Council of Governments).

The role of the County Sustainability Plan in the comprehensive planning process is to be developed. Sustainability for localities is evolving. The FCSC Sustainable Plan Committee should provide ideas regarding the sustainability element for the new Comprehensive Plan, including goals and performance measures, to Shannon. This is important to do while the Plan is in draft as it is developing. David recommended looking at the plans for Portland, other localities in the Cascades, Omaha, and Chattanooga. Also see sustainablecities.net.

Committee Reports and Discussion:

FCSC Sustainability Plan

- The Vice Chair advised that the Committee had put its efforts on hold until after hearing today's presentation on the County's new Comprehensive Plan. Work will now resume.

Solid Waste Management Options Study Update

One of the six public forums has been held. The next one will be tomorrow night in Oakdale. It would be good to see some friendly faces there.

OSER Updates:

- Shannon provided the course review forms from the recent Sustainability Event at FCC
- Proposed solar facility at Frederick County Landfill: The County asked Solar City for a proposal. The proposed power purchase agreement would utilize an existing contract. Current costs for electricity vary from four to twelve cents per KWh across County sites.
- Update on PACE commercial energy lending program: Payments due for loans from the County for energy efficiency measures to be implemented by local businesses would be shown on the annual property tax bill. The details are being worked on as to how the program would be administered, including liability and responsibility issues. The County may use a third party administrator for the program, such as PACE Financial. Once details are worked out, staff will make a recommendation to the County Executive about moving forward. Shannon has met with the County Treasurer and the Finance Director; both are okay with the program. The Economic Development Office will present the plan to the County's business sector to gain their support. For now, the Green Business Challenge consists of individual programs; a whole program tying all of this together is envisioned for the future. Currently, there is no County staff for helping to green the business/commercial sector.
- The County is applying for another residential energy efficiency grant for \$1M. Awards from this grant will need to be competitively bid.
- Nutrient trading program: Shannon will represent county governments for MACO as a nutrient trading program is developed for the state. Wastewater treatment plants could remove more nutrients from their discharges as credits for other county dischargers.
- Sustainability indicators for the comprehensive plan: Shannon has discussed this issue with David Whitaker.
- Heather Montgomery will be leaving OSER. Shannon will be looking for candidates to fill two staff positions.

Water Body Buffer Bill:

Things are going well. No need for a letter of support from the FCSC.

Commission Members Items of Interest:

- Tom went to a meeting of the DNR's Forestry Board. They are working on a program regarding turf to trees, which has the goal of increasing water quality by reducing chemical runoff from lawn care and providing other benefits of forest cover. The state budget is tight.
- Susan talked about air emissions from idling vehicles. Shannon pointed out that there is a bit on the OSER web site that addresses this issue.
- Ron K. discussed life cycle costs for electric vehicles. The Sierra Club has issued a report with a commitment on EV numbers. He is working on the issue of how our intern could post information to the County web site.

- Chris M. attended a solar energy conference in Washington, DC earlier this week. The solar tax credit is about to expire (at the end of 2016) and now is not expected to be renewed by Congress. Utility scale projects are being cancelled since they can't be completed by the end of next year. Many jobs will be lost. This will affect the Clean Power Program to decarbonize utilities.
- Mike U. is looking to fill two entry-level positions in his company.
- Tim J. stated that the FCSC needs to be aligned with David Whitaker's efforts on the Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing what we have in place now and planning for 2025 and 2040 will be important for our vision. Shannon suggested that we could be exchanging information with David on a continuing basis.
- Mike S. asked to join the Sustainability Plan Committee. He was enthusiastically welcomed.
- Jennifer B. attended a meeting on the alliance of businesses for the Chesapeake Bay.
- Annie J. suggested we have a more substantial intern for the summer to help with our planning effort; perhaps this would be a graduate student.

Public comments:

- Brad Gottschall advised that Michael Gilbert is the new sustainability person at Fort Detrick.

Action Items:

- 10-1.** Focus areas for FY 2016: comprehensive planning and energy efficiency. **There is now a committee to develop the Sustainability Plan, which will also work with the County's comprehensive planning process. Perhaps another committee to work on energy efficiency issues is also needed? We need to further define this in terms of outcomes as an agenda item to discuss how to move forward for a future meeting. We would need to bring in subject matter experts.**
- 10-2.** Field trips: Shannon Moore will begin scheduling. **She is working with Emmitsburg on the December field trip. Annie J. will draft a press release on the field trips. [A press release about the Emmitsburg wastewater treatment plant field trip was issued by the County on 12/10/15.] Tim J. will talk to local farmers about adding some farms to the list of field trips. This will include getting meeting places and contacts at those farms. Catoctin Mountain Orchard is a possibility, since it has organic farming practices.**
- 10-3.** Intern: Annie Jones to plan on getting intern from local college starting in spring semester to work for FCSC 4 to 6 hours per week. Shannon to look for space in her offices. **Annie will draft an advertisement to seek an intern for the spring semester. She will include public outreach, the web site, and social media in the ad. [Annie has posted the ad with a due date of 1/11/16 for applications. Several inquiries and at least one application have already been received.]**
- 10-4.** Sustainability Plan: SP Committee to develop three options for decision by County Executive. ~~[Since meeting, this has been put on hold until the November meeting when the County's Comprehensive Planner will discuss the role of sustainability planning in the development of the County's new comprehensive plan.]~~ **Committee to meet on 12/18/15.**
- 10-5.** Spot recognition certificates: Members to look for nominees. **Ongoing. McCutcheon put solar panels on its roof recently---a possible candidate.**

- 10-6. Sustainability Event of 10/16/15: Shannon to provide feedback from course review forms for next meeting. **Provided.** Presentations and Roundtable results to be posted on web site (by intern?) **TBD.**
- 10-7. Water body buffer bill: Commission to decide on whether to support, and if so, how. **Not needed. [The County Council passed the bill on 12/1/15.]**
- 10-8. County Green Teams: Need to assemble a comprehensive list that includes all municipalities with teams and contact information shown. FCSC to send a letter inviting liaisons from the teams to attend FCSC meetings. **Ron K. has started a list and has been attending City of Frederick Green Team meetings.**
- 10-9. FCSC evening meetings: Shannon is looking into feasibility and logistics. **Shannon to follow up on the availability of the third floor hearing room in Winchester Hall for night meetings in 2016, starting at 7 pm and looking at other Wednesdays.**
- 10-10. FCSC committees: Invite community volunteers to join. **We need to come up with an approach to accomplish this.**

Adjourn: Following a motion, which was seconded and unanimously approved, the chair thanked all for their participation and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.